

Suffolk County Strategic Sites Inventory



A brownfield in Suffolk County

A Brownfield Opportunity Area Program Proposal
to the New York State Department of State

Submitted by
Suffolk County

March 30, 2012

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Part C: Project Description and Other Criteria

1. Summary Project Description

The applicant, Suffolk County, intends to complete a Pre-Nomination Study Strategy for a 583,680 acre area characterized with more than 124 potential brownfield sites that are within 4 strategic clusters in Suffolk County. The primary community revitalization objectives to be achieved by this project include: identifying strategic areas affected by concentrations of brownfields; assessing their economic redevelopment potential through the development of enhanced neighborhood and site profiles for the strategic clusters, establishing priorities for redevelopment and further action; and coordinating with and building on existing economic development initiatives and local, county, and regional growth area plans. Anticipated community benefits resulting from this project include community input into the prioritization and reuse of strategically clustered brownfields.

2. In-Depth Project Description

A. Overview

The goal of this project is to create a comprehensive inventory of underutilized sites in Suffolk County that will inform strategic decisions for economic redevelopment.

This application describes how Suffolk County is changing: becoming more diverse, adapting the built environment to suit the needs of an aging population, and the economic transformation from a post-defense era to an innovation economy. The County realizes that brownfields redevelopment is an integral component to economic development, job creation, and downtown revitalization with the environmental benefits of protecting our greatest assets, our drinking water and open spaces.

Suffolk County, with a population of 1.5 million, is the most populated county in New York State (excluding New York City). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Suffolk County is the 23rd largest county in the United States and has a population larger than 11 states. The five most western townships, Huntington, Babylon, Smithtown, Islip and Brookhaven, contain 91 percent of the population, though only 62 percent of the land area.

The western border of Suffolk County lies just 15 miles east of New York City, separated just by Nassau County. The County is bordered by Nassau County to the west, the Long Island Sound to the north, and the Atlantic Ocean to the south and east. While land use in western Suffolk County is predominantly suburban residential, significant amounts of land are also used for commercial, industrial, institutional, and open space (parkland), purposes. Eastern Suffolk County, which comprises more than one third of the County's 912 square miles, is predominantly semi-rural in nature and contains predominantly agricultural, recreational, open space, and residential land uses.

Historic Land Use: Defense Contractors

Suffolk County was once home to several of the nation's large defense contractors including Grumman, Fairchild, and Republic Aviation, to name a few. These companies, as well as their contractors and subcontractors, were a very significant economic engine for the county. However, the vast majority of the defense giants have closed or moved to other areas of the Country, bringing their supporting businesses along with them. While the main facilities of these defense giants are well known, it is unclear whether the exodus of their contractors and subcontractors has contributed to the creation of numerous smaller, but equally troubling, Brownfield sites in the county.

Suffolk County Brownfield Interagency Task Force: Internal Capacity for BOA

Brownfields redevelopment is not new to Suffolk County. The Brownfields Pilot Program for Suffolk County was established by Legislative Resolution No. 527-1998 and adopted in the fall of 1998. The program, administered by the Department of Health Services, provides funding for the remediation of County-owned brownfield properties to facilitate the redevelopment into parks, community centers and municipal buildings. The Department of Health Services has experience managing multiple brownfields remediation projects through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Environmental Restoration Program. Through this capital program, the County has invested \$5.9 million in remediation, site improvements, and reconstruction of 5 specific brownfields.

In 2007 the County formed the Brownfields Interagency Task Force comprised of the departments of Health, Planning, and Real Estate (see Attachment A). The Task Force has reviewed hundreds of properties referred by the Treasurer's Office and has quickly made informed decisions based on information gathered by all departments represented on the Task Force, deciding collectively to not take 83 properties for environmental liability concerns.

The Task Force makes recommendations to the Treasurer's Office on which parcels the County should not take due to possible environmental concerns. There are 83 properties countywide that have not been taken by the County because of environmental concerns, and another 41 properties that were not taken by the County prior to the Task Force's creation, for a total of 124 properties. The \$20 million in back taxes owed on these 124 properties continues to accumulate, the on-site pollution remains a threat to our drinking water, and these properties blight neighborhoods, impeding economic development.

The Suffolk County's Brownfield Interagency Task Force has only identified these properties only after the nonpayment of taxes, and has not proactively established a comprehensive inventory of Brownfields sites throughout the County. Therefore, a regional scan is necessary to create a countywide inventory of brownfield sites.

The work products from Suffolk County's Pre-Nomination will complement ongoing planning and economic development efforts. There are three ongoing Brownfield Opportunity Area grants within Suffolk County: Huntington Station, Riverhead, and Wyandanch. This county-wide scan will complement existing BOAs and prepare additional sub-regions for a Step

2 Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination. Below is a brief summary of ongoing planning and economic development projects:

Suffolk County 2035 Comprehensive Plan: Suffolk County is in the midst of completing a Comprehensive Plan, the first update in more than 30 years. Last summer the County released the Volume 1A of the Comprehensive Plan (see Attachment B), highlighting demographic, economic, and quality of life trends. The County is currently working on Volume 1B with information on natural resources, brownfields redevelopment, wastewater infrastructure, farmland protection, housing, and transportation characteristics, with a tentative release date later this year.

Suffolk County Transfer of Development Rights Study: In addition, the Suffolk County Division of Planning is currently conducting a regional Transfer of Development Rights study to encourage better participation within existing local and regional TDR programs. The study is intended to foster coordinated development right absorption within identified and designated growth zones in the County while protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

The **2011 Long Island Strategic Plan**, received the ‘Best Plan’ award by the Empire State Development Corporation, calls for the “revitalization of downtowns, blighted areas & commercial centers by providing incentives to stimulate the redevelopment of vacant, abandoned & blighted properties.” Consistent with the Long Island Strategic Plan, the information gathered in the Brownfield Opportunity Area Pre-Nomination study will serve to facilitate the redevelopment of properties that have suffered from disinvestment. *(See the Complementary Projects section for additional information.)*

In sum, Suffolk County is has the experience and staff to successfully implement a Pre-Nomination Study that will provide the resources and information to facilitate strategic economic redevelopment decisions.

B. Evaluation Criteria

Concentration of Brownfields & Strategic Opportunities

While the Brownfield Interagency Task Force has identified 14 downtowns with brownfields, there are 5 specific communities that have established downtowns, a rail road station, and contain clusters (at least 4 brownfields) of already identified brownfields by the County. While further research many render additional clusters, the initial 5 communities include: Bay Shore, East Patchogue, North Amityville, Wyandanch, and North Bellport. Huntington Station is not one of the clusters identified because there are not many sites located in Huntington Station that were identified in the Brownfields Interagency Task Force. In addition, because Huntington Station and Wyandanch already have a successful Brownfield Opportunity Area program already underway, the County will focus on the four clusters of Bay Shore, East Patchogue, North Amityville, and North Bellport. A further scan countywide and specifically in and around the initial four clusters will yield additional brownfields and clusters. As part of the public outreach component, Suffolk County will outreach to the staff overseeing the other BOAs within the County to coordinate and collaborate.

| Suffolk County Communities with Established Downtowns Having 50 or More Storefronts, 2010 | | | |
|--|---------------------|---|---|
| | Railroad Station | Brownfield Identified by Task Force | Cluster with At Least 4 Brownfields |
| Babylon | Yes | No | |
| Bay Shore | Yes | Yes | x |
| Bridgehampton | Yes | No | |
| Center Moriches | No | No | |
| Cold Spring Harbor | Yes | No | |
| Copiague | Yes | Yes | |
| Deer Park | Yes | Yes | |
| East Hampton | Yes | No | |
| East Islip | No | No | |
| East Northport | Yes | Yes | |
| East Patchogue | Yes | Yes | x |
| Greenlawn | Yes | No | |
| Greenport | Yes | No | |
| Hampton Bays | Yes | Yes | |
| Huntington Station | Yes | Yes | |
| Islip | Yes | Yes | |
| Kings Park | Yes | Yes | |
| Lindenhurst | Yes | Yes | |
| Montauk | Yes | No | |
| North Amityville | Yes | Yes | x |
| North Bellport | Yes | Yes | x |
| Northport | No | No | |
| Ocean Beach | No | No | |
| Port Jefferson | Yes | No | |
| Riverhead | Yes | No | |
| Sag Harbor | No | No | |
| Saint James | Yes | Yes | |
| Sayville | Yes | Yes | |
| Smithtown | Yes | Yes | |
| Southampton | Yes | No | |
| Westhampton Beach | Yes | No | |
| Wyandanch | Yes | Yes | x |

Source: Suffolk County Planning

Indicators of Economic Distress

Many of the Brownfield sites in Suffolk County are located in or near economically distressed areas. Suffolk County's preliminary analysis of 83 sites identified by the Brownfields Interagency Task Force has rendered 5 initial clusters in the low-income communities of Wyandanch, North Amityville, East Patchogue, Bay Shore, and Brentwood.

Based on data from the Census Bureau's 2005-2009 American Community Survey, Wyandanch, an area recently targeted by the Town of Babylon for redevelopment through grants from the Brownfields Opportunity Area Program, has the tenth highest unemployment rate (9.2% vs. 3.4% for all of Suffolk County), the fourth highest percentage of residents living below poverty (18.5% vs. 5.4% for all of Suffolk County), and the third highest percentage of the population receiving public assistance (7.3% vs. 1.2% for all of Suffolk County) of 157 communities in the County. Similarly, North Amityville has a relatively high unemployment rate and percentage of the population on public assistance. The Brownfield sites that have been identified by the County by the Suffolk County Brownfield Interagency Task Force appear to be disproportionately distributed in economically challenged areas.

| Economic Characteristics of Communities Identified as Having Clusters of Brownfields | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Brownfield Cluster | 2005-2009 Unemployment | 2005-2009 % Below Poverty | 2005-2009 Median Home Value as % Of County Median | 2010 Downtown Vacancy Rate | 2010 Shopping Center Vacancy Rate | # of initial brownfields Identified by Suffolk County* | 2009 Ranking of economic distress by Suffolk County (out of 157)** |
| Wyandanch | 9.2% | 18.5% | 69% | 21.4% | 11.4% | 7 | 1 |
| North Amityville | 7.8% | 10.8% | 81% | - | 15.4% | 7 | 3 |
| North Bay Shore | 6.4% | 8.4% | 85% | 20.2% | 10.7% | 9 | 6 |
| East Patchogue | 4.8% | 19.7% | 77% | 14.9% | 10.3% | 6 | 23 |
| North Bellport | 3.8% | 10.6% | 74% | - | 21.1% | 7 | 20 |
| Suffolk County Total | 3.4% | 5.4% | 100% | 10.9% | 12.3% | 83 | |

Source: Suffolk County Planning, U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2005-2009.

*83 sites identified by the Brownfields Interagency Task Force.

**1 is the highest ranking, the most economically distressed out of 157 communities.

Partners

Suffolk County's Brownfield Opportunity Area Grant has the support of our Federal, State, local officials, economic development groups, and community based organizations, all of whom will be invited to participate in the Suffolk County Brownfield Working Group.

Economic Value

The 2011 Long Island Strategic Plan was developed with significant public input in 2011 and received the ‘Best Plan’ award by the Empire State Development Corporation. The Plan calls for the “revitalization of downtowns, blighted areas & commercial centers by providing incentives to stimulate the redevelopment of vacant, abandoned & blighted properties.” At least 3 of the Transformative Projects receiving a portion of the \$101.6M in funds awarded to Long Island involve the redevelopment of blighted commercial areas (Wyandanch, Ronkonkoma, and Central Islip) in Suffolk County. Consistent with the Long Island Strategic Plan, the information gathered in the Brownfield Opportunity Area Pre-Nomination study will serve to facilitate the redevelopment of properties that have suffered from disinvestment.

Last summer the County released the first volume of the County’s Comprehensive Plan, the first update in more than 30 years. Suffolk County has a large and diverse economy with a skilled, well-educated workforce. Below are some economic and demographic trends that indicate how Suffolk County is in the midst of a transformation. All of these trends are highlighted in Volume 1A of the County’s Comprehensive Plan, available online at the County’s website.

| Key Demographic and Economic Trends in Suffolk County | |
|---|--|
| Rising poverty rate | In a relatively high cost area such as Suffolk County, poverty can be easily understated because the thresholds are based on a national standard. In 2009, 5% of the population (78,000 people) in Suffolk was living in poverty. Suffolk County has the highest foreclosure rate in New York State. |
| Rising number of one-person households | Although there is a perception that Suffolk County is entirely comprised of family households, there is a growing demographic of one-person households that will have different energy needs than families. In 2010, single-family households accounted for 74% of all households in Suffolk County, down from 84% in 1980. The one category of family households responsible for this decline has been married couples with children under age 18. In 1980 this category accounted for 43% of all households in the County, but that number was 27% in 2010. In Suffolk County, the number of one person households increased 95% from 1980 to 2010. In 2010, 21% of all households were single person households, up from 14% in 1980 and just 9% in 1970. |
| Increasing number of foreign born residents | The foreign born population has risen significantly, representing 13% of the population. |
| An aging population | The 2010 census revealed that 45,000 or 23% of the County’s seniors (age 65 and over) live alone, and that 29% of Suffolk County households contain a senior citizen. These figures are even more striking in the five eastern Suffolk towns: 19% of the population is age 65 or over and 35% of all households contain a senior citizen. |
| Small business owners are the backbone of the local economy | Sixty-two percent of Suffolk’s businesses employ fewer than five persons, and 78% of businesses in Suffolk employ fewer than 10 persons. Through 2010, the number of businesses located in Suffolk County has held fairly steady despite the recent recession. There were more than 49,000 business establishments with payroll in 2010 in Suffolk, an all-time high and a 4% |

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| | increase since 2005. The largest numbers of businesses are in the construction category; followed by retail trade, professional & technical services, health care, and financial activities. |
| Weakening housing market | The median price of an existing single-family home in Suffolk county has dropped for 2011 to \$317,000 from its peak in 2007 of \$410,000, a decline of 22.7%. The decline began in 2008, when median prices fell to \$385,000, then continue in 2009 (\$340,000) and 2010 (\$335,000). |
| Rising energy costs | Average residential electric prices on Long Island have risen from 13.38 cents per kWh in 1999 to 18.32 cents in 2011, a 37 percent increase. The largest increases came in the mid-2000s, beginning in 2003, when the cost per kWh increased from 13.88 cents to 14.69 cents. As oil prices rose worldwide through 2007, prices for electricity on Long Island, which uses mostly oil to power its electric plants, rose accordingly. |

Suffolk County Tax Act & Estimated Economic Impact of Brownfields Redevelopment in Suffolk

Unlike any other county in New York State, the County makes every other taxing jurisdiction in Suffolk whole each year, pursuant to the Suffolk County Tax Act, and only the County bears the burden of unpaid real estate taxes. Since only the County owns all of the tax liens on properties within the County, no sharing of any proceeds received by the land bank will be necessary, and any deficiency will remain the problem of the County. Nevertheless, cooperation will be required between the County, the localities and the purchasers of land bank properties, because land use decisions, including zoning, subdivision and site plan approval occur at the Town and Village level.

The ability to sell properties to buyers who will clean them up, will "end the bleeding" for Suffolk County and make these properties productive again. The return of properties to effective use combined with returning those properties to the tax rolls will allow them to become revenue generating and produce a positive stream of income that past attempts of conducting tax lien auctions failed to realize. The income generated will be documented quarterly. Suffolk County has, for the past two decades, accumulated in excess of \$20 million in back taxes on several dozen vacant, abandoned, and environmentally contaminated tax-delinquent properties. If that \$20 million were paid in full, the injection of that money back into the economy could produce an economic multiplier of 300 percent, or roughly \$63.9 million. The biggest potential economic impact of brownfields redevelopment promises to be in the property value increases realized by land-use improvements. A report issued by New Partners for Community Revitalization found that the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield properties leads to property value increases on the order of 5 percent to 15 percent for properties that are up to 3/4 of a mile from the site. Using that economic model applied to Suffolk County's inventory, the local economy would realize an income increase of anywhere between \$15 and \$45 million in revenue, and create approximately 690 to 2,094 jobs for county residents.

Suffolk County is pursuing a land bank designation by the Empire State Development Corporation to facilitate brownfields redevelopment (See Attachment C). Regardless of whether the County receives the designation or not, the BOA Pre-Nomination Study will facilitate

informed economic redevelopment decisions and position municipalities to submit Step 2 Nomination studies for the strategic clusters identified in this study.

Environmental Value: Sole Source Aquifer

Suffolk County is surrounded by vulnerable surface waters and sits atop a critical sole source aquifer. According to the draft Suffolk County Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan, 13 out of more than 200 classified freshwater bodies in Suffolk County have been included on the New York State Draft 2010 Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters. Maintaining the quality of Suffolk County's surface and groundwater resources is pivotal to maintaining a healthy environment for its residents as well as sustaining its surface waters that are critical for the County's tourism economy.

Providing services to 1.5 million people requires careful allocation of resources. The County is already experiencing a reduction in its current sales tax revenue and future revenue projections. Without alternate sources of funding, the County's ability to identify, assess, and redevelop Brownfield sites will be hampered by declining revenues.

C. Project Implementation

Task 1: Outreach and Engagement

Task 1A: Coordinate with community, local, regional, state and federal partners by establishing the Suffolk County Regional Brownfield Working Group

To ensure that the plan is coordinated with other levels of government and community groups, Suffolk County will form a Regional Brownfield Working Group with proposed participation from:

- Town representatives
- Suffolk County Supervisors Association
- Suffolk County Village Officials Association
- Congressmen Bishop, Israel, King
- New York State Senators LaValle, Flanagan, Zeldin, Johnson, Marcellino, and Fuschillo
- New York State Assemblymen Losquadro, Thiele, Murray, Englebright, Graf, Ramos, Fitzpatrick, Boyle, Raia, Conte, and Sweeney
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Department of State
- New York State Department of Transportation
- Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
- Empire State Development Corporation, Long Island office
- Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2
- Long Island Regional Planning Council
- Smart growth advocacy groups
- Environmental advocacy groups
- Civic participation from strategic clusters

Please see attached letters of support that indicate a willingness to participate in such a group. The purpose of the group is to share information, review and prioritize strategic areas identified by staff, and facilitate the creation of sub-regional Step 2 BOAs. The group will have scheduled meetings on a quarterly basis.

Task 1B: Engage municipal representatives from other BOAs in Suffolk County

Within Suffolk County there are three ongoing Brownfield Opportunity Area programs: Huntington Station, Riverhead, and Wyandanch. Suffolk County will engage officials from all three active BOAs to coordinate and collaborate throughout the project.

Task 1C: Community Survey and Meeting

The project will coordinate with the anticipated outreach efforts for the County Comprehensive Planning Process and regional Transfer of Development Rights study. Suffolk County will solicit input through an online survey and facilitate a public meeting to share information and develop criteria to prioritization cluster identification.

Task 1D: Criteria Development

Working with the input received from the community and municipal officials, the Brownfields Regional Brownfields Working Group will finalize a set of criteria that will be used to rank the economic redevelopment and environmental significance of clusters identified in Task 2.

Task 1 deliverables include: meeting summaries, attendance sheets, and a list of strategic areas ranked by regional economic development priorities

Task 2: Cluster Identification

Recognizing the need to conduct a comprehensive inventory of sites across the County, staff from Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning will:

- review historic land use records for properties a mile around the sites already identified by the Brownfields Interagency Task Force in an effort to identify additional possible brownfields; and
- look for vacant commercially and industrially zoned properties (identified by pictometry) in established downtowns, commercial corridors, and near railroad stations to identify additional strategic clusters.

Once there is an initial list of strategic clusters, demographic and economic information will be compiled for each cluster including: the proximity to Empire Zones, Environmental Zones, Urban Renewal Districts, Industrial Parks, Business Improvement Districts, Federal Enterprise Zones, the existence of sewer infrastructure, commercial vacancy rates, property values, and unemployment rates. Prior to presenting this information to the Suffolk County Regional Brownfield Working Group, staff from the Department of Health, Real Estate, and Economic Development and Planning will perform a reconnaissance of the area to groundtruth the data.

Suffolk County has recognized that while we have many nascent companies that are formed around new technologies in our universities and laboratories, we are not successful in retaining those companies and seeing them grow in the region. An additional goal of the Suffolk County Brownfield Opportunity Area Program will be to evaluate the blighted commercially and industrially-zoned properties, and select those that would be appropriate for a growing high-technology or biotechnology company that is graduating from one of our incubator programs, or coming out of a university or laboratory. Working with the Town Supervisors, Suffolk County will seek to designate the appropriate properties as “Innovation Zones”, and will seek to make those properties available at a discounted rate to eligible companies that are committed to investing in workforce growth, infrastructure or equipment to locate and grow their company in Suffolk.

The Suffolk County Regional Brownfield Working Group will then review information presented and prioritize the strategic clusters based on regional economic development and environmental considerations.

Task 3: Create enhanced site profiles within each strategic cluster

Specific properties will be identified within each strategic cluster by looking at vacant property that former industrial and commercial uses on existing vacant land and cross reference the information with existing environmental databases including the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s Superfund registry and spills database. Records from the Real Property Division of the Department of Economic Development and Planning will be reviewed for sites where commercial and industrial properties have been taken for tax arrears as well as sites that are currently in tax arrears. This should be a prime indicator of a site that are abandoned or in jeopardy of being abandoned.

The data and information that has been mined from the brownfields identified in previous tasks will be compiled in a standard recordkeeping format with GIS capabilities specified by the County.

Specific information for each property will include:

- Tax map id
- Street address
- Parcel size
- Current zoning
- Historic land uses
- Chain of Title
- Relation to current locally adopted comprehensive land use plan, regional plan, etc.
- Neighborhood demographic characteristics: commercial vacancy rate, unemployment rate
- Proximity to transit
- Economic development incentives
- Hydrogeological zone
- Environmental information & site constraints: wetlands, Pine Barrens, etc.
- Presence of sewage infrastructure

The enhanced site profiles will be shared with the members of the Suffolk County Regional Brownfield Working Group to facilitate the application for future sub-areas within the Brownfield Opportunity Area by local municipalities. In addition, it is envisioned that the County could use this information as part of tax lien auctions either performed by the County or by a land bank. The County is currently in process of applying to Empire State Development Corporation for the establishment of a land bank specifically tailored to facilitate brownfields redevelopment (see Attachment C and details earlier in this application).

If certain sites or areas are deemed more appropriate for redevelopment or remediation through another program, those will be identified. The data will also serve to detail non-clustered Brownfields that may be eligible for other grant opportunities.

Task 4: Continue to convene the internal Brownfields Interagency Task Force

Suffolk County's Brownfield Interagency Task Force, comprised of representatives from the County Departments of Health, Planning, and Real Estate, reviews parcels taken by the Treasurer's Office for nonpayment of taxes after the redemption period has expired for possible environmental issues.

The internal Brownfields Interagency Task Force will continue to meet quarterly for the duration of the BOA grant. Each property that Suffolk County is considering acquiring by tax deed is reviewed initially by the Suffolk County Brownfield Interagency Task Force to determine whether they are potentially an environmental liability. Data, including but not limited to, property description codes, property size, ownership and aerial photos are gathered. A physical inspection is made to determine actual property use, and to look for obvious or potential environmental hazards. The Suffolk County Department of Health Services is then notified so that they can determine if there are any files that indicated past or known contamination. Next, representatives from SCDHS and the Inventory Unit report their findings to the Interagency Brownfields Working Group where a determination is made whether or not to take the property. Approximately 150– 250 properties undergo the initial review process leaving approximately 40–60 properties actually reviewed by the Intra-Agency Brownfields Workgroup on an annual basis.

Task 5: Prepare Pre-Nomination Study Final Report

Staff will ensure programmatic compliance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act for actions resulting from the inventory of these brownfield sites. As necessary, a Long Environmental Assessment Form will be prepared and a coordinated review conducted with all involved agencies. The County will render a determination of significance and prepare any required documentation resulting.

After hosting a public meeting to solicit input from the Regional Brownfield Working Group and the public, the County will evaluate the input received and prepare a pre-nomination study for consideration and approval by the New York State Department of State.

Grant Management

The county has the internal infrastructure to manage and successfully execute a BOA program and will use existing staff to conduct all of the tasks outlined for the grant.

| Division of Responsibilities | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Task | Department of Economic Development & Planning: Planning Division | Department of Economic Development and Planning: Real Estate Division | Department of Health Services: Office of Pollution Control |
| 1. Outreach and Engagement | Responsible for invitations, meeting sign in, and summaries, meeting facilitation | Participation in meetings. | Participation in meetings. |
| 2. Cluster Identification | Prepare a map of identified sites by the Interagency Working Group. Identify commercially and industrially-zoned vacant properties in established downtowns and near railroad stations to identify additional strategic clusters. Map all strategic clusters in relation to economic development incentives, transit, and demographic characteristics. Share information with Brownfield Working Group. Facilitate discussion and prioritization of strategic clusters. | Review historic land use records a mile around the identified brownfields to find additional possible brownfield sites. Share information with Planning and Health. | Review departmental environmental records on properties identified by Planning and Health. |
| 3. Create Enhanced Site Profiles | Planning will prepare an inventory and locate the following information: Tax map id, street address, parcel size, current zoning, relation to land use plans, commercial vacancy rates, unemployment rates, proximity to transit, eligibility for economic development incentives, hydrogeological zone, environmental site constraints: wetlands, Pine Barrens, etc., and the presence of sewage infrastructure. | Records will be reviewed for sites where commercial and industrial properties have been taken for tax arrears as well as sites that are currently in tax arrears. Real Estate will compile the following information per parcel: Historic land uses and chain of title. Real Estate will participate in field inspections of all sites. | Health will cross reference identified sites within the strategic clusters with information with existing environmental databases including the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation's Superfund registry and spills database. Health will lead the field inspections of all sites with the participation from Real Estate and Planning. |
| 4. Continue to convene internal Interagency Brownfields Task Force | Planning to participate. | Real Estate to convene quarterly meetings of internal work group. | Health to participate. |
| 5. Prepare Pre-Nomination Study | Planning to draft with input from Real Estate and Health | Real Estate to provide input and review draft | Health to provide input and review draft |

3. Complementary Projects

The work products from Suffolk County's Pre-Nomination will complement ongoing planning and economic development efforts. There are three ongoing Brownfield Opportunity Area grants within Suffolk County: Huntington Station, Riverhead, and Wyandanch. This county-wide scan will complement existing BOAs and prepare additional sub-regions for a Step 2 Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination.

Suffolk County's Division of Planning is currently conducting a regional Transfer of Development Right Study to encourage better participation within existing local and regional TDR programs. The study is intended to foster coordinated development right absorption within identified and designated growth zones in the County while protecting environmentally sensitive areas. Identified growth zones in Suffolk County include approximately 83 BOA's where coordination and implementation between local land use decisions and county economic development initiatives can be realized. The utilization of the Transfer of Development Right zoning tool would, among other benefits, enable certain projects to breach the Suffolk County Sanitary Code Article 6 constraints up to double density without cost prohibitive waste treatment facilities; provide for managed and predictable development/provides certainty for speculators and targets growth to infrastructure nodes; identifying BOA's as TDR as-of-right receiving sites would facilitate restoration and reuse of the property.

County Comprehensive Plan 2035 The county is currently updating its comprehensive plan and is collecting information about the conditions of the county including environmental and socioeconomic data, and identifying goals and policies that will best meet the needs of present and future residents. The Plan examines existing and proposed land uses, existing and future needs for housing, commercial and industrial facilities, the adequacy and needs of transportation and other infrastructure, the protection of the environment as well as the needs for open space and parkland. The County is currently working on Volume 1B with information on natural resources, brownfields redevelopment, wastewater infrastructure, farmland protection, housing, and transportation characteristics, with a tentative release date later this year.

Sewer Infrastructure Chapter: County Comprehensive Plan 2035: Suffolk County Planning is currently preparing the wastewater infrastructure chapter of the Suffolk County Comprehensive Plan 2035. This effort will contribute to defining a regional perspective on the extent to which areas in the County are served by various public and private sewage treatment facilities; which areas are under study for expansion of sewer service; which areas will continue to rely on private septic systems; and how all of these areas relate to existing land use, land available for development, demographics and projected growth in the county.

In addition, the Pre-Nomination Study will be coordinated with the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council and the Long Island Regional Planning Council and the towns and villages of Suffolk County.

4. INVOLVEMENT BY THE PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Established community groups, local municipal officials, and regional entities will be consulted throughout the project to facilitate site identification and prioritization. The project will coordinate with the anticipated outreach efforts for the County Comprehensive Planning Process and regional Transfer of Development Rights study. Suffolk County will invite municipal leaders to a public outreach session and facilitate additional public participation through online surveys.

In sum, Suffolk County has both the technical and programmatic expertise to manage this project and oversee all tasks well within the time period of this grant. Though many County agencies will be involved in this project, the grant will be managed by the Department of Economic Development and Planning.

Part D: Level of Support

Not applicable

Part E: Project Personnel and Management Team

Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning

Andrew Amakawa, Research Technician

Andrew Amakawa is a Research Technician within the Regulatory Review Unit of the Suffolk County Department of Planning. Andrew's primary work functions are subdivision review, research, staff support to the Planning Commission, foil coordination, database and file management. Andrew's past work experience includes the day-to-day administration of Suffolk County's Farmland Preservation Program, and program development for F.E.G.S. (a non-profit) administered Nassau County Welfare-to-Work Program. Andrew holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Urban Studies from Vassar College.

Andrew P. Freleng, Chief Planner

Andy is Chief Planner at the Suffolk County Department of Planning overseeing the Regulatory Review Unit that analyses zoning and subdivision applications on behalf of the Suffolk County Planning Commission; Andy is also Vice Chair of the Central Pine Barrens Credit Clearinghouse and a member of the Board of Directors of the New York Planning Federation. Prior to coming to Suffolk County, Andy was Chief Planner for the Town of Southampton and prior to that, Chief Environmental Planner for H2M Group (an engineering, architecture and planning firm). Andy holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science from Long Island University-Southampton College and a Master of Science Degree in Environmental Management from Long Island University-C.W. Post Campus. Andy will be the assistant project manager.

Sarah Lansdale, Director of Planning

Sarah is the Director of Planning. Prior to joining the County, she was the Executive Director at Sustainable Long Island where she directed ten land use community planning processes in economically distressed communities, resulting in the creation of nine community groups to locally direct revitalization efforts, the adoption of ten land use plans, and the investment of \$500 million in private equity and public funding for mixed-use, transit-oriented development groups. While at Sustainable Long Island, Ms. Lansdale was part of consulting teams for the Huntington Station BOA and Wyandanch BOA. Sarah also has experience at WLIW21 Public Television, fundraising, and oversees as a Peace Corps volunteer. Ms. Lansdale has a Masters Degree of Urban Planning from New York University and an undergraduate degree in Environmental Studies. Sarah will be the project manager.

Peter Lambert, Principal Planner

Peter is a Principal Planner who has served the Suffolk County Department of Planning since 1988. His work experience includes authorship of research studies, analyzing local development trends and demographic and economic data, and interpreting this data for local government agencies and the general public. Peter also serves as the Planning Department's representative on the Suffolk County citizen advisory panel to the Suffolk County Downtown Revitalization program. Peter holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Lehigh University in economics and mathematics, and an MBA degree from Hofstra University with a concentration in marketing.

Carl Lind, Cartographer

Carl is a Cartographer at the Suffolk County Department of Planning overseeing the Cartographic /GIS unit. Carl has over 30 years of experience in map preparation, graphic design, geospatial analyses, desktop publishing/report preparation, website maintenance and maintaining the department's GIS system. Carl sits on the Suffolk County GIS users group committee, Suffolk County GIS technologic committee and the Long Island Geographic Information Systems (LIGIS) user group steering committee. Carl holds an Associates of Arts degree from Suffolk County Community College Selden Campus.

Michael Mulé, Environmental Projects Coordinator

Michael Mulé is an Environmental Projects Coordinator with the Suffolk County Department of Planning. He has been with the Department's environmental analysis unit since 2005. Mr. Mulé obtained both a Bachelor of Science degree and Masters in environmental science and management from the University of Rhode Island. He currently coordinates County compliance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act and serves as staff support to the Suffolk County Council on Environmental Quality. Mr. Mulé is a LEED Accredited Professional and a member of the Long Island Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council's Regionalization Task Force.

Kathryn Oheim, Assistant Cartographer

Kathryn is the Assistant Cartographer in the Cartographic Unit at the Suffolk County Department of Planning. Her work duties include creating custom maps, performing geospatial analytical analyses, report preparation and production, graphics creation and website maintenance. Kathryn's previous work experience includes working as Technical Assistant at the University of Texas at Austin Geological Sciences Department where she managed collections, created graphic educational displays, and taught laboratory courses, and as a Geologist and Paleotechnician for The Two Medicine Center & the Wyoming Dinosaur Center where she assisted in active scientific research and worked as an ecotourism guide. Kathryn holds a Bachelor of Science in Geologic Sciences and a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin, as well as a Master of Arts & Sciences in Environmental Studies from Washington University in St. Louis where she focused on creating new forms of predictive modeling in the area of paleontology utilizing current mapping technology and geospatial analytical techniques.

Suffolk County Department of Health Services

Edward Roe, Public Health Sanitarian III

Edward Roe received his B.A. in Natural Science and Mathematics from Dowling College. He is currently a Public Health Sanitarian with the Office of Pollution Control, Bureau of Environmental Investigation and Remediation. In the six years that Edward has been with the County, his work experience has included the review and investigation of properties for environmental site assessments initiated by both the County and the private sector, the installation and removal of underground storage tanks, evaluation of the proper storage of toxic and hazardous materials, and the enforcement of the Suffolk County Sanitary Code.

Suffolk County Department of Economic Development & Planning – Real Estate

Samuel Bail – Land Management Specialist IV

Sam received his B.S. in Business Administration from Nichols College, Dudley, MA. He has experience with appraisal work, examining title abstracts, deeds and related documentation. His current duties include initial inspection and maintenance of properties that the County has acquired for non-payment of taxes, additional periodic field inspections, note and file entries, as well as management and complaint response regarding said County properties.

Loretta Bunch, Land Management Specialist III

Loretta Bunch attended S.U.N.Y. at Morrisville, New York – AAS Horticulture. Has had business experience with Realty Service Co. She's been employed with Suffolk County since October 1999. She has experience with examination of property records, preparation of reports, index and filing reports, reviewing reports with other agencies, recording of documents, thorough knowledge of legal documents and terminology. She has the ability to read and understand property descriptions, conveyance documents, tax maps, subdivision maps and surveys, ability to understand and prepare abstracts dealing with complex title issues. Loretta can apply or interpret NYS Real Property Tax Law, Suffolk County Tax Act, and NYS Real Property Law. She deals with many Suffolk County Departments as well as title companies, attorneys, and the general public.

PART F: PROJECT SCOPE AND WORK SCHEDULE

Suffolk County's Pre-Nomination Brownfield Opportunity Area Program is expected to take 18 months to complete at the point at which the contract is signed between the County and New York State and the work plan is approved by New York State Department of State. Existing Suffolk County staff will be used to implement the project scope.

| | | Schedule (months) | |
|-----------|--|-------------------|-----------|
| Tasks | | Begin | End |
| 1. | Outreach & Engagement | 1 | 18 |
| 1A | Convene Suffolk County Regional Brownfield Working Group | | |
| 1B | Engage other BOA municipalities | | |
| 1C | Community Surveys and Meeting | | |
| 1D | Develop criteria | | |
| 2. | Cluster Identification | 1 | 8 |
| 2A | Map existing sites | | |
| 2B | Land use & records review to identify additional properties | | |
| 2C | Map proposed clusters & Compile information | | |
| 2D | Share information with Regional Brownfield Working Group | | |
| 2E | Prioritize clusters | | |
| 3. | Development of Enhanced Site Profiles (within each strategic cluster) | 6 | 15 |
| 3A | Data compilation: zoning, environmental, historic land use | | |
| 3B | Data sharing | | |
| 4. | Continue to convene internal Brownfields Interagency Task Force | 1 | 18 |
| 4A | Quarterly information sharing meetings | | |
| 5. | Prepare Pre-Nomination Study | 15 | 18 |
| 5A | Community Input | | |
| 5B | Public Comment Evaluation | | |
| 5C | Finalize Pre-Nomination Study | | |

Task 1: Outreach and Engagement

To ensure that the plan is coordinated with other levels of government and community groups, Suffolk County will form a Regional Brownfield Working Group with proposed participation from a cross section of municipal representatives, federal and state entities, civic groups, and advocacy organizations. Suffolk County will engage officials from all three active BOAs to coordinate and collaborate throughout the project.

The project will coordinate with the anticipated outreach efforts for the County Comprehensive Planning Process and regional Transfer of Development Rights study. Suffolk County will solicit input through an online survey and facilitate a public meeting to share information and develop criteria to prioritization cluster identification.

Working with the input received from the community and municipal officials, the Brownfields Regional Brownfields Working Group will finalize a set of criteria that will be used to rank the economic redevelopment and environmental significance of clusters identified in Task 2.

Task 1 deliverables include: meeting summaries, attendance sheets, and a list of strategic areas ranked by regional economic development priorities

Task 2: Cluster Identification

Recognizing the need to conduct a comprehensive inventory of sites across the County, staff from Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning will review historic land use records for properties a mile around the sites already identified by the Brownfields Interagency Task Force in an effort to identify additional possible brownfields; and identify vacant commercially and industrially zoned properties in established downtowns, commercial corridors, and near railroad stations to identify additional strategic clusters.

Suffolk County has recognized that while we have many nascent companies that are formed around new technologies in our universities and laboratories, we are not successful in retaining those companies and seeing them grow in the region. An additional goal of the Suffolk County Brownfield Opportunity Area Program will be to evaluate the blighted commercially and industrially-zoned properties, and select those that would be appropriate for a growing high-technology or biotechnology company that is graduating from one of our incubator programs, or coming out of a university or laboratory. Working with the Town Supervisors, Suffolk County will seek to designate the appropriate properties as “Innovation Zones”, and will seek to make those properties available at a discounted rate to eligible companies that are committed to investing in workforce growth, infrastructure or equipment to locate and grow their company in Suffolk.

Once there is an initial list of strategic clusters, demographic and economic information will be compiled for each cluster including: the proximity to Empire Zones, Environmental Zones, Urban Renewal Districts, Industrial Parks, Business Improvement Districts, Federal Enterprise Zones, the existence of sewer infrastructure, commercial vacancy rates, property values, and unemployment rates. Prior to presenting this information to the Suffolk County Regional Brownfield Working Group, staff from the Department of Health, Real Estate, and Economic Development and Planning will perform a reconnaissance of the area to groundtruth the data.

The Suffolk County Regional Brownfield Working Group will then review information presented and prioritize the strategic clusters based on regional economic development and environmental considerations.

Task 3: Create enhanced site profiles within each strategic cluster

Specific properties will be identified within each strategic cluster by looking at vacant property that former industrial and commercial uses on existing vacant land and cross reference the information with existing environmental databases.

The data and information that has been mined from the brownfields identified in previous tasks will be compiled in a standard recordkeeping format with GIS capabilities specified by the County.

Specific information for each property will include:

- Tax map id
- Street address
- Parcel size
- Current zoning
- Historic land uses
- Chain of Title
- Relation to current locally adopted comprehensive land use plan, regional plan, etc.
- Neighborhood demographic characteristics: commercial vacancy rate, unemployment rate
- Proximity to transit
- Economic development incentives
- Hydrogeological zone
- Environmental information & site constraints: wetlands, Pine Barrens, etc.
- Presence of sewage infrastructure

The enhanced site profiles will be shared with the members of the Suffolk County Regional Brownfield Working Group to facilitate the application for future sub-areas within the Brownfield Opportunity Area by local municipalities. In addition, it is envisioned that the County could use this information as part of tax lien auctions either performed by the County or by a land bank. The County is currently in process of applying to Empire State Development Corporation for the establishment of a land bank specifically tailored to facilitate brownfields redevelopment (see resolution attached and details earlier in the application).

If certain sites or areas are deemed more appropriate for redevelopment or remediation through another program, those will be identified. The data will also serve to detail non-clustered Brownfields that may be eligible for other grant opportunities.

Task 4: Continue to convene the internal Brownfields Interagency Task Force

The internal Brownfields Interagency Task Force will continue to meet quarterly for the duration of the BOA grant. Each property that Suffolk County is considering acquiring by tax deed is reviewed initially by the Suffolk County Brownfield Interagency Task Force to determine whether they are potentially an environmental liability.

Task 5: Prepare Pre-Nomination Study Final Report

Staff will be devoted to ensure programmatic compliance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act for actions resulting from the inventory of these brownfield sites. As necessary, a Long Environmental Assessment Form will be prepared and a coordinated review conducted with all involved agencies. The County will render a determination of significance and prepare any required documentation resulting.

After hosting a public meeting to solicit input from the Regional Brownfield Working Group, internal Brownfields Interagency Task Force, and the public, the County will evaluate the input

received and prepare a pre-nomination study for consideration and approval by the New York State Department of State.

PART G: APPLICANT'S SHARE

The Applicant's 10% matching share will be paid by Suffolk County. The match consists of a portion of the fees associated with staff managing the project and in-kind costs associated with County vehicles that will be used to conduct site visits associated with the grant.

PART H: PROJECT BUDGET

Description of reasonableness of cost

The county has the internal infrastructure to manage and successfully execute a BOA program. After reviewing other successful Step 1 projects, the County notes that our approach is cost effective because existing staff that have successfully worked together in the past will be utilized to perform all of the tasks associated with the project over an 18 month timeframe. Further, recognizing that Suffolk County is 583,680 acres in size, the total cost per acre to perform a regional scan is \$0.43 per acre. While staff costs account for the majority of costs in the proposed budget, nonpersonal items in the project budget are: ink and paper expenses related to the production of maps used in public meetings and reports and required training session in Albany for BOA grantees. The costs for each nonpersonal item in the budget were identified through vendor quotes for the ink and paper expenses and through the IRS standard mileage reimbursement rate as well as the GSA rate for travel to Albany.